



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

For Immediate Release MONDAY Afternoon Papers, June 14, 1943 W.

OWI-2025

The most highly prized of all the tunas, the white-meated albacore, will be sought by fishermen of Washington and Oregon late this month, when the first runs of these fish may be arriving in coastal waters, according to Coordinator of Fisheries Harold L. Ickes.

Although the first albacore usually have appeared between July 1 and 15, last year the initial catch was made on June 22 off the mouth of the Columbia River.

Almost the entire catch of albacore, which last year amounted to about thirteen million pounds, is canned in the modern and well equipped tuna plants of Astoria and Hammond on the Columbia River. A small pack is also made at Aberdeen, Washington.

In earlier years, the only sources of albacore were the tropical and semi-tropical waters off California and southward. Catches in these areas had declined almost to the vanishing point when albacore were discovered in 1936 off the coasts of Washington and Oregon, where a branch of the Japan current apparently provides suitably warm water. Landings of albacore quickly jumped from a million and a half pounds in the first year of operations to the 8- to 13- million-pound level now maintained by this fishery.

Most of the albacore boats fish for other species during the balance of the year, taking sharks in the winter, and halibut and miscellaneous bottom fish in the spring before the albacore season opens up. California tuna clippers formerly came north for albacore, but in 1942 so many clippers had been withdrawn for naval service that none took part in albacore fishing.

Using a method borrowed from the California clippers, many northern albacore fishermen now use anchovies and small pilchards as live bait, which they throw overboard to attract the albacore. When the tuna rush in to capture the small fish, they are taken on short lines which may be fished by teams of several men.

The albacore, a powerful and fast-swimming fish, may weigh as much as 80 pounds, but is usually smaller. Little is known about its habits and migrations. Since neither eggs nor young have been taken in our coastal water, it is believed the spawning grounds must lie in some distant part of the Pacific.

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